How To Manage Bulk Listings

Sell Hundreds Of Products Without Losing Your Marbles

Are you ready to move up to the big kids' sandbox? eBay's regular selling tools are great for occasional sellers, but if you sell more than a handful of products each week, they're inefficient. After all, they're designed for ease of use, not speed.

When you need to manage dozens, hundreds, or even thousands of simultaneous sales, look to Turbo Lister and Selling Manager, two tools that work together to help you manage bulk listings more efficiently.

Turbo Lister

eBay's Turbo Lister (pages.ebay.com/turbo_lister) is a turbocharged replacement for eBay's Sell Your Item form. A tool for medium- and high-volume sellers, Turbo Lister lets you create hundreds or thousands of product listings in bulk.

You don't have to sell hundreds of items at a time to use Turbo Lister, though; its features can be handy for all frequent sellers. Turbo Lister lets you save details about a product in order to sell it again and again, and it remembers your selling choices to save time. It includes a visual HTML (Hypertext Markup Language) editor for creating more attractive auction descriptions. You can use Turbo Lister's ready-made templates to make snappy-looking listings even if you don't know anything about HTML.

The Preview Listings function lets you see what your auction will look like before it goes live. And the Bulk Edit function lets you change multiple auctions at once.

Instead of using the Web browser, Turbo Lister is a separate program that runs on your PC. You'll need Windows 98 or later, but you don't need a very powerful computer: It only needs a Pentium II processor or later with 64MB RAM. You'll also need at least 20MB of free hard drive space (although high-volume sellers will need more.) The program is not available for users running MacOS or Linux.

Turbo Lister is free, but you're still responsible for the regular eBay fees for listings that you create with it. (eBay's Fees are explained at pages.ebay.com/help/sell/fees.html.)

Get Started

To begin, download Turbo Lister or get it on CD-ROM. At 29MB, it's a rather large download. If you don't have a fast enough Internet connection for a file that size, you can order a CD-ROM for the cost of shipping from www.theebayshop.com (you'll find it in the Business Tools section). To download the file, point your Web browser to pages.ebay.com/turbo_lister/download.html and click the Turbo Lister Web Setup link. Follow the prompts to install the program.

The first time you start the program, you'll need to tell it about your eBay account and preferences. At the What Would You Like To Do? screen, choose Set Up A New Turbo Lister File. Type in your eBay user ID and password when prompted, and Turbo Lister will retrieve your account details from eBay and ask you to confirm your contact information.

Next, you'll be able to create a new item listing or import listings from your eBay account. If you choose Import, the program can import your current auctions, as well as ones that have ended in the past month. This is handy if you've already created auction listings that you would like to reuse.

For now, choose to add a new item: Turbo Lister will ask whether you want to sell the item in an auction, use a fixed-price format (that is, Buy It Now), or post a real estate ad. If you select the Save Selections checkbox, the program won't ask you this again next time, which can be a time-saver.

The next steps are similar to creating an auction listing with eBay's regular Add An Item form. Enter the item title and optional subtitle and then choose a category and optional second category. The Find Category button brings up a handy expandable list of eBay categories: click each category's plus sign (+) to show subcategories and then click OK to choose your category. You can type the category number if you know it or click the Category field for a drop-down menu of recently used categories.

Next is the Enter Your Description window, where you can include details about the product you are selling. Features for saving time and making great-looking auctions abound in this window.

You'll start in the Design View tab. Type the auction description in the top half of the window. You can use the text style tools located near the top of the window to change the look of the text: You can change the color, size, font, and alignment of text and use bold, italics, or underlining for emphasis. The Numbering and Bullets buttons make it easy to make lists.

If you constantly use the same text for auction listings, pay attention to the Inserts drop-down menu: Here you can enter text for fast insertion into your auction listings. Choose Create An Insert. In the window that appears, give the insert a name (such as "Payment And Shipping") and type the text one last time—such as your standard payment and shipping requirements. Click Save. From now on, you can choose Payment And Shipping (or whatever you called your insert) from the Inserts menu, and that text will be instantly pasted into the product description.

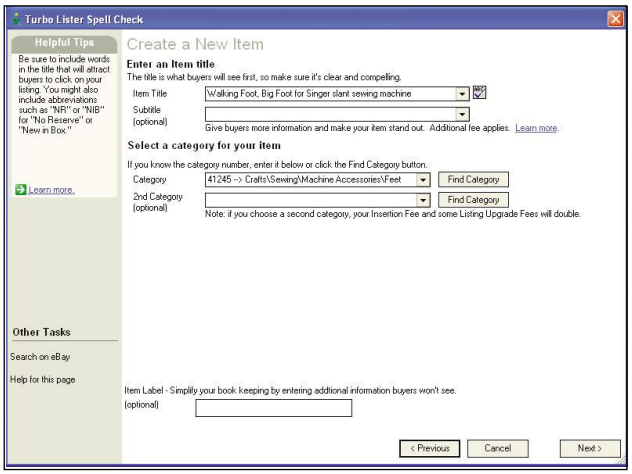
To add extra visual appeal to your listing, click the Use Designer button. From there, you can choose from various themes and layouts. Listings that use the Designer cost 10 cents extra (twice that if you list the auction in two categories).

In the bottom half of the Design View is the picture area, where you can add up to a dozen images to your auction. Click one of the empty image boxes (labeled Click Here To Insert A Picture) and locate an image file on your computer. That image will automatically be added to the auction listing. The program uses eBay's image hosting service: The first image is free, and each additional image costs 15 cents. If you prefer to put the images on another server, click the Change Photo Hosting link. In this case, you'll be prompted to enter the URLs (uniform resource locators) of your images.

At the very bottom of the window, click the Select A Counter button to insert a free hit counter to the auction page.

If you know HTML, click the HTML View tab, where you can see and edit the HTML code for your auction listing. Click the Preview tab to see what your auction listing will look like.

When you're happy with the listing, click the Next button for the final step of the auction listing, Format Specifics. Here you can set the Starting, Buy It Now, and Reserve prices, the duration of the auction, quantity of products, and other payment and shipping details. Take the time to do this right the first time because most of these settings can be saved as the default for future use. When you're done, click Save.


Turbo Lister Spell Check
Helpful Tips
Be sure to include words in the title that will attract buyers to click on your listing. You might also include abbreviations such as "NR" or "NIB" for "No Reserve" or "New in Box."
Learn more.
Other Tasks
Search on eBay
Help for this page
Create a New Item
Enter an Item title
The title is what buyers will see first, so make sure it's clear and compelling.
Item Title
Walking Foot, Big Foot for Singer slant sewing machine
Subtitle (optional)
Give buyers more information and make your item stand out. Additional fee applies. Learn more.
Select a category for your item
If you know the category number, enter it below or click the Find Category button.
Category
41245 --> Crafts\Sewing\Machine Accessories\Feet
Find Category
2nd Category (optional)
Find Category
Note: if you choose a second category, your Insertion Fee and some Listing Upgrade Fees will double.
Item Label - Simplify your book keeping by entering additional information buyers won't see.
(optional)
< Previous
Cancel
Next >

The first steps of creating a new product listing are similar to those in the regular eBay seller form.

Item Inventory Window

Now that you've created your listing, you'll be looking at the Item Inventory window, which lists all of your auctions in Turbo Lister's database. If you want to create a second auction of the same product, now or later, highlight the auction and click the Duplicate button. Double-click the new item to change any specifics, such as title or category.

Your auctions have not begun yet: They only exist on your PC. The advantage here is that you can get many auctions ready without waiting for information to be sent to eBay's Web site. When you're ready to start the auctions, Turbo Lister uploads them to eBay. You could queue up dozens or hundreds of auctions, start the upload process, and walk away.

When you are ready to upload the listings to eBay, select the items that you're ready to sell and click the Add To Upload button. Click the Upload button, and your auctions will begin.

Products waiting to be uploaded appear under the Listings Waiting To Upload tab. A handy feature there is the Calculate Listing Fees button: Highlight one or more auctions, click that button, and the program will tell you what it will cost to list them on eBay. (The fees for each auction will appear in the Fees column.) You can also use the Change Start Time button to delay the auction start until

a future time (an extra 10-cent fee applies for this service).

Once you create an auction listing, it takes almost no effort to list that item again. The products that you just listed for sale are still listed under the Item Inventory tab. So you can sell an identical item now or in the future by highlighting it and clicking Add To Upload.

Double-click an item on the Item Inventory page to edit it. Instead of the three-step Create A New Item form, you can edit inventory that's already in the list with the Auction Details window. This single screen lets you view and edit every aspect of the auction. It's a convenient way to change any element of an auction before you relist it.

The Edit Multiple Items command, located under the Edit menu, is particularly useful for wholesale changes to your listings. Select two or more items on the Item Inventory window and choose Edit Multiple Items. Now you can change the Starting, Buy It Now, and Reserve prices, payment methods, shipping costs, and other details for all selected inventory in one fell swoop.

Remember, Turbo Lister is dedicated to adding listings; you can't use it to change an auction's description or other information after uploading it. Any changes you make with the Edit Item or Edit Multiple Items commands will change the item for the next time you start a new auction for that product. Use the My eBay section of the Web site or the Selling Manager (described below) for that.

More Turbo Lister Features

You can use the Multiple Items function to save time when selling items such as books, DVDs, music CDs, video games, digital cameras, PDAs (personal digital assistants), and so on. From the Item Inventory page, click the Create New button and then choose Multiple Items. Now you can enter the ISBN (International Standard Book Number) number, UPC (Universal Product Code) number, or other identifying information about your products, and eBay will automatically add information about them and pictures of them. All you'll have to do is pick a category and add any information specific to your product.

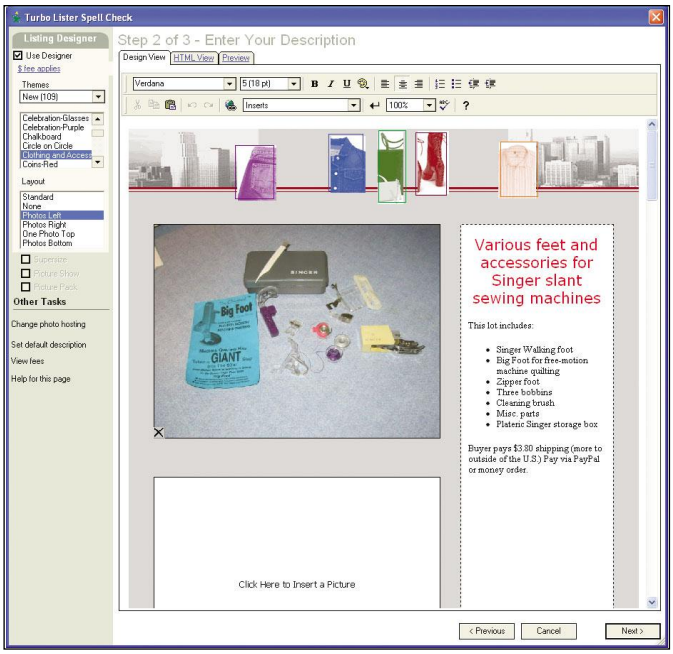
You can also add the same ready-made product information to a listing that you've already created by right-clicking its entry in the Item Inventory and choosing Add Prefilled Information.

Turbo Lister's Import and Export functions, both available under the File menu, are useful for busy sellers. The Export Selected Items command will create a comma-delimited text file (also known as a CSV file) with information about the items in your inventory, which you can open in your spreadsheet application. The Import Items command lets you create new inventory items from CSV files, from other power-users' tools (such as Seller's Assistant and Mister Lister, an obsolete program), and from current and past eBay listings. The latter is a quick way to bring products into the program that you listed before downloading Turbo Lister.

The CSV file support is very useful for moving information between Turbo Lister and other programs. CSV is simply a text file with informational fields (such as product name, starting price, description) in a specific order separated by commas. If you have a list of products in your spreadsheet, you can create a CSV file using your spreadsheet's export command and import the list into Turbo Lister.

Use the Change Format button to switch a product listing between auction and fixed-price formats. For instance, if you are selling some T-shirts via auction and want to sell other T-shirts for a fixed price, highlight an auction, click the Duplicate button, and click Change Format to change its format to Fixed Price. Then double-click the product to edit it, set the price, and upload that new item.

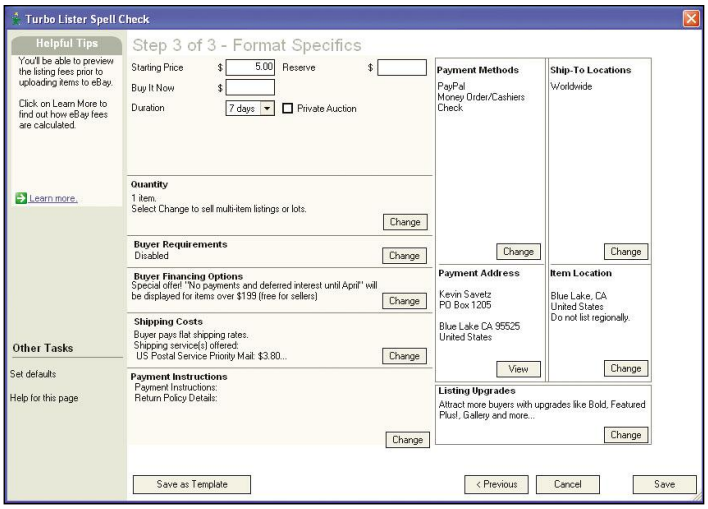
When you have hundreds or more products in the Item Inventory list, finding a particular one might be tricky. Use the Search button to find products that include the words you specify in the title or description. The Activity log (choose Activity Log from the View menu) helps you keep track of which products you have uploaded to eBay, and when.


Turbo Lister Spell Check
Listing Designer
Step 2 of 3 - Enter Your Description
Design View
HTML View
Preview
Various feet and accessories for Singer slant sewing machines
This lot includes:
Singer Walking foot
Big Foot for free-motion machine quilting
Zipper foot
Three bobbins
Cleaning brush
Misc. parts
Plastic Singer storage box
Buyer pays $3.80 shipping (more to outside of the U.S.) Pay via PayPal or money order.
Click Here to Insert a Picture
< Previous
Cancel
Next >

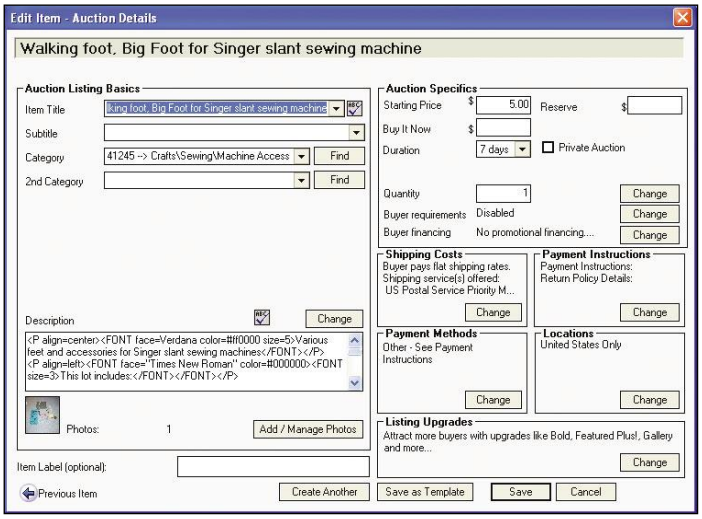
The Designer option provides extra layouts and graphics that you can use to create sharp-looking product listings.

If you sell different types of products that you would like to keep organized separately, Turbo Lister offers a couple of ways to organize them. You can click the Item Inventory folder and select New Folder to create subfolders for your product listings. Or, choose New User File from the New menu to create another user within Turbo Lister. You can associate the new user with the same eBay account or a different one. To switch between accounts later, choose Users from the View menu.

If you need more help with Turbo Lister, visit the Turbo Lister Discussion Board (forums.ebay.com/db1/forum.jsp?forum=34). You can ask and answer questions and read official announcements and helpful hints from eBay.



The Format Specifics window is the final step in creating an auction or Buy It Now listing.



The cluttered Edit Item window lets you change anything and everything about a product listing.

Selling Manager

Turbo Lister helps you get auctions going. Selling Manager (pages.ebay.com/selling_manager) is the answer to the other part of the equation: managing auctions once they have started and when they have ended. Combined, Selling Manger and Turbo Lister are a powerful team for busy sellers.

Selling Manager tracks sales, letting you monitor active listings and schedule future listings. When the auction is over, it tracks your communication with the buyer, including details such as whether the buyer has paid and you've shipped the item. Email templates speed up such communication with the buyer; you can leave feedback in bulk using prewritten messages and keep track of the feedback buyers leave for you. When it's time to ship, the utility can print shipping labels and invoices, even combining items sold to one buyer into a single invoice.

Unlike Turbo Lister, Selling Manager is a Web-based tool, so it works on any computer and doesn't require a download. And unlike Turbo Lister, Selling Manager isn't free: It costs $4.99 per month after a 30-day trial period.

For high-volume and business sellers, there is a more powerful option: Selling Manager Pro, which costs $15.99 per month. The Pro version adds monthly profit and loss reporting, automatic buyer notification when you receive payment and ship the product, and automatic posting of feedback. It lets you print invoices and labels in bulk and can also help manage your inventory, including keeping track of how many products you have to sell and alerting you when it's time to restock. Finally, it includes many of the features of Turbo Lister, eliminating the need to use both applications. You can find a full comparison of Selling Manager and Selling Manager Pro at pages.ebay.com/selling_manager/comparison.html

To start using either tool, go to the Selling Manager information page (pages.ebay.com/selling_manager) and click the Subscribe Now link. Here, we'll look at the features of the standard Selling Manager.

Once you've signed up, the Selling view in My eBay will be replaced by a new Selling Manager view. It can take a couple of hours for your auction information to become available in the Selling Manager view. So take a break, come back to the computer in a while,

go to My eBay, and click the Selling Manager link.

Summary Page

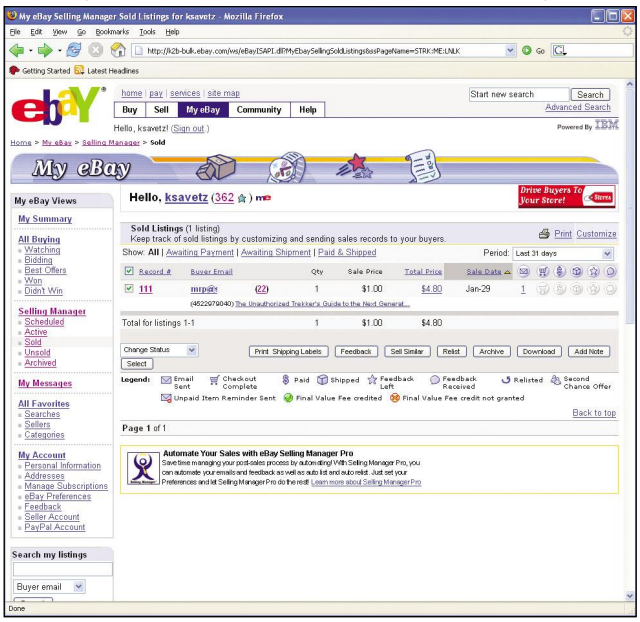
You'll see the Selling Manager Summary page, which shows how many scheduled, active, and sold products you have, plus other useful information. The Summary page can remind you of what you need to do next: It shows how many products are paid for but need to be shipped, how many have questions pending from potential buyers, and how many remain unpaid. Click any of those links on the Summary page for a list of the products that need your attention.

Click the Active Listings link to get the rundown on the auctions that you're running currently. This is similar to the ordinary Selling page, but Selling Manager adds some useful features. Select the checkbox next to an item and then click Add Note to store comments or reminders for that item, which will be visible only to you. Click the Customize link to change the order of, or information shown in, the columns.

After The Auction

Selling Manager really shines once the auction has ended. Just click the Sold link to see a list of recently ended auctions.

To email a buyer, click his email address. An Email Buyer form will appear. Use the Template drop-down menu to choose a form letter to send the buyer. These include Winning Buyer Notification (your first contact once an auction has ended), Payment Reminder, Shipping Notification, and others. To save you time, the forms are prefilled with the relevant information. The Winning Buyer Notification, for example, lists the item won and gives the total cost including shipping. You can edit the message to include any special information for that buyer and then click the Send Email button to deliver it.



Print shipping labels, leave feedback, and keep track of payment and shipping progress with the Selling Manager's Sold page.

Messages sent with this system come from eBay's servers, with an eBay.com From: address, so they are more likely to make it to the buyer's inbox instead of his spam filter.

The email templates are generic enough that they should be fine for most sellers. If you would like to add information to those boilerplate messages, click the Edit Templates link. There you can personalize the canned messages to save time later. Because the templates automatically fill in the specifics for each auction, you can use macros (which eBay calls "automatic text"). "{TOTAL$}", for instance, will be replaced with the total cost of the sale including shipping and insurance. eBay provides a complete list of autotext macros at pages.ebay.com /help/sell/autotext.html.

Sales Record Page

The Sales Record page is an extremely useful feature, but there's no big Sales Record button, so it's very easy to miss it altogether. On the Sold page, you'll notice that each ended auction has a record number. Click that record number to reveal the Sales Record page for that product. The page lets you figure the buyer's shipping cost and print an invoice and packing slip.

In the Buyer Details section, you can enter the address and other contract information for that buyer. The Instant Fill In Box can speed the process: Just copy the buyer's name and address from an email message, paste it into the box, and click the Add button. The address will automatically be moved to the appropriate fields. Next is the Transaction Details area, where you can compute the shipping, handling, and tax for the product.

With the address and shipping information entered, click the Print Invoice button. Here you can print an invoice and a packing slip. You can also choose Invoice For Your Own Records, which produces a similar invoice with your private sales information and notes included, as well.

Finally, at the bottom of the Sales Record page is the Status And Notes section. There, you can log when the product was paid for and shipped and write other notes to yourself. It also tells you if you have sent and received feedback for that transaction. There are other areas within the Selling Manager to do these things, but this can be a convenient way to manage all of these details in one place.

Sold & Shipped

So the buyer receives your invoice and pays for a product. Back at the

Selling Manager's Sold page, select the checkbox next to the item and use the Change Status drop-down menu to make a note of that. The options there are Paid, Shipped, and Paid & Shipped. A confirmation page will appear where you can make a note of which method the buyer used to pay. If the buyer used PayPal via the link included in the invoice, the payment status will update automatically.

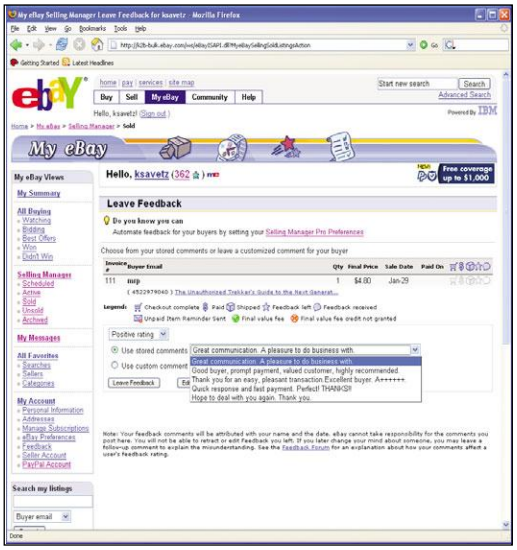
When you are ready to ship the item, click the checkbox next to that item and click the Print Shipping Labels button. This will bring up your PayPal account, where you can print labels for the U.S. Postal Service or UPS. (USPS labels are only available if both you and the buyer are in the United States.) If you have linked your eBay and PayPal accounts, the buyer's address information will be prefilled.

Enter the package weight and type of mailing service you want and the site will print a mailing label, complete with postage, the cost of which is deducted from your PayPal account. In addition to the cost of postage, there is a 20-cent fee per label, but it beats standing in line at the post office.

Also on the Sold page, click the Relist button to quickly start an auction or Buy It Now offer for an identical product. You may select several auctions at once and then click Relist to relist them in bulk. Or click the Sell Similar button, which lets you edit the categories and description before relisting a new item.

The Download button is a useful tool for tracking sales trends. Select some or all of your past auctions and click Download. This action will download Sales records for those items to your computer as a CSV text file. You can import that file into your spreadsheet application to sort and search your sales history. Sold and archived products are available for download for four months after an auction closes, and there is a maximum download size of 10,000 records.

Click the Download Sales History link for a more configurable version of the download utility, located in the Seller Tools box. There you can choose which records to download by limiting the selection by time period or only download items that are awaiting payment or shipment.



Selling Manager lets you leave feedback for a single buyer or dozens of buyers at once.

More Selling Manager Tools

Now that the product has been paid for and shipped, you can leave feedback for the buyer. Selling Manager helps with this, too. Back on the Sold page, select an auction and click the Feedback button. There you can leave feedback by choosing one of several prewritten comments from the drop-down menu. (Or, select several auctions to leave feedback for many buyers at once.) Imagine, no more leaning on the plus sign (+) key to type A++++++. You can click the Edit Stored Comments button to change the default comments or create your own, with a maximum of 10.

There's more handy information in the Seller Tools box, including information about the eBay Accounting Assistant, which exports your sales information into QuickBooks, and access to the standard My eBay Selling page.

Once an auction is paid for and you ship the product, select it and click the Archive button. That will move it from the Sold page to the Archived page, where it will be out of sight but still available for reference later. Click the Archived button to review archived sales. They're grouped by month for easy reference.

Not every auction is a success story. Products that didn't sell in the allotted time are listed on the Selling Manager's Unsold page. From there you can relist the item if desired. The Archive button is replaced on this page with a Delete button. If you're done trying to sell that product, select it and press Delete to banish it.

Going, Going, Gone!

Have questions about Selling Manager? There is a discussion board devoted to it at forums.ebay.com/db1/forum.jsp?forum=116. In addition to user Q&A, the forum serves up the latest news about new features and upcoming enhancements.

Selling Manager and Turbo Lister are like peanut butter and chocolate: two great tastes that taste great together. For moderate to heavy sellers, the pair should be enough to make selling on eBay faster, most efficient, and ultimately more profitable. Heavy sellers might want to consider forgoing Turbo Lister and pick up Selling Manger Pro, which incorporates Turbo Lister's features and adds bulk-processing functions. RS

BY KEVIN SAVETZ